Today. Tomorrow. Assistive Technology.



Missouri Assistive Technology 2004 - 2005 Annual Report

Assistive Technology Today.

Assistive Technology Tomorrow.

Our intention with the 2004-2005 annual report is twofold. First, we reflect on the accomplishments achieved during this past year and, second, this report addresses the challenges of tomorrow. Assistive technology is an ever evolving field in terms of devices, programs and policies. Correspondingly, as change occurs the Council and staff aim to modify programs, services and policies in order to continue a history of effective assistive technology provision.

The reauthorization of the federal Assistive Technology Act during this year will result in a major refocus of activities, with greater emphasis on those activities that directly place assistive technology into the hands of individuals with disabilities. In response to these new expectations, the Council and staff reviewed all of MoAT's programs and services. We are pleased to report that in the vast majority of areas Missouri was already meeting or exceeding the requirements of the new law. However, upon our hard look at the status quo, we decided to realign some resources to even better meet the requirements of tomorrow.

This year also saw the amendment of the Council's state law allowing it to establish a non-profit arm along with a trust fund. This will enable the Council to seek additional private resources to support MoAT programs and services. We are excited about this opportunity to improve the depth and breadth of current and future assistive technology programs.



We continue to be extremely proud of the programs and services you will read about in this annual report. We hope all who read this report share in our vision of a comprehensive, integrated set of programs and services that provide access to assistive technology for all Missourians with disabilities.

Jim Brinkmann, Chairperson

Council Members during 2004 - 2005:

Consumer Representatives:

Rita Lynch, Past-chair Marjorie Yates, Chair-elect

Teddi Brace Chris Craiq

Marnie Gustafson Shari LaRoussa Deana O'Brien Karin Sack

James Summers Rhonda Triller Agency Representatives:

Chairperson, Jim Brinkmann - RSB

Aurita Prince Caldwell - Health & Senior Services

Dolores Hampton - DD Planning Council Neil Harms - Vocational Rehabilitation

Angela James - IL Center Ed Kniest - Medical Services

Betty McCartney - Special Education (Nominated)
Molly White - Dept. of Insurance (Nominated)

Nancy Nickolaus - Mental Health

Legislative Representatives:

Senator Harry Kennedy Representative Kevin Threlkeld



Staff:

Diane Golden, Ph.D., Director Roselie Backer-Thompson, TAP for Internet Coord. David Baker, Program Coordinator Marty Exline, Policy Coordinator Gay Jones, TAP for Telephone Coordinator Tracy LaFollette, Administrative Assistant Mike Parker, Operations Manager Brenda Whitlock, Training Coordinator

Council & Staff

Missouri Assistive Technology Council

A bill was passed this year to enable the Missouri Assistive Technology Council to establish a not-for-profit organization designed to expand options for soliciting external funding to support assistive technology programs and services. The bill also set up the Assistive Technology Trust Fund, and clarified the responsibilities and duties of the MoAT Council. The Missouri Assistive Technology Council was also recognized this year for achievements in consumer service. The Council was presented with a Shining Star Award during the 2005 Star Employee Recognition ceremony.



Rita Lynch, Past-chairperson, accepts a Shining Star Award from OA Commissioner Mike Keathley.

Accessible Housing

An effort was made this year to establish an individual tax credit for households that have members with disabilities and that need to make their homes more accessible. The expense of making an entryway or a bathroom accessible can be prohibitive for individuals and families. The tax credit would have provided some relief for out-of-pocket expenses for home accessibility. The credit would have been refundable, so that even very low-income individuals would have benefited. The bill did not pass, but is likely to be re-introduced next session.

Special Education Funding for Assistive Technology

For the third year, the Division of Special Education provided funding to MoAT to reimburse school districts for assistive technology required in student IEP's. Districts applied for funding to MoAT for assistive technology expenditures. The minimum cost per student supported was \$1,000 and the maximum was \$5,000. It is hoped that additional funding will be available next school year.

Also this year, the MoAT short-term equipment loan program (ETC) received funding through the Blindness Task Force in the Division of Special Education to increase the availability of vision related adaptive devices in the loan pool. This reduced wait time for equipment in ETC. A little over \$30,000 in additional funding was made available. More information about this year's AT reimbursement program and ETC, both administered by MoAT can be found in later sections of the annual report.

Service Dogs

Legislation passed this year to establish criminal penalties for individuals who physically harm or cause the death of a service dog. The bill also established penalties for any person who harasses a service dog, preventing the animal from performing its duties. The bill also makes it a crime for an individual to misrepresent a dog as a service dog.

Medicaid Coverage of Assistive Technology

A bill passed this session that eliminates the state statutory requirement for Missouri to provide optional Medicaid services for adults. This includes almost all assistive technology. Coverage for children was not impacted. Some AT may still be provided for adults through the annual appropriations process. For example, covered AT in the state FY06 budget includes manual and power wheelchairs, prosthetics, and oxygen and respiratory equipment. Appropriations were not provided for adult Medicaid coverage of other wheelchair accessories, hearing aids, augmentative communication devices and any other AT. The bill also eliminates Missouri Medicaid completely by 2008 to be replaced with a program or system yet to be determined.

First Steps

A bill passed this session that revises the structure and operation of the First Steps Program (Missouri's IDEA Part C Early Intervention Program). Included in the bill are provisions for a sliding fee scale for family participation and some financial support from insurance. The bill specifically requires the Part C system to implement an assistive technology re-utilization plan and MoAT is working with the lead agency on specifics for this plan.

Voting Access

The Secretary of State's office established an equipment review committee to provide recommendations regarding approval of voting equipment for use in Missouri. MoAT staff provided accessibility review through direct evaluation of equipment and through user feedback analysis.

In addition, a bill passed this session that revises the requirements for curbside voting. Under previous Missouri law, election officials were only required to take voting equipment to a disabled voter unable to use an inaccessible polling place "when time permitted." That phrase has been removed, requiring voting officials to provide curbside voting in a more timely manner.



Council member Deana O'Brien (left) visits with Missouri Senator Kit Bond about assistive technologu.

New Demonstration Centers

Missouri Assistive Technology funded three Regional Assistive Technology Demonstration Centers during the second half of this fiscal year. A new initiative starting with the passage of the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 made this possible. The Demo Centers are located as follows:

Kansas City - Coalition for Independence,

The Assistive Technology Center

Columbia - Show Me Tech, Services for Independent Living

Springfield - Missouri State University, Regional

Assistive Technology Demonstration Project

These centers have combined for 1,793 consumer demonstrations, 1,145 provider demonstrations and the training of 2,245 people on various assistive technology issues.



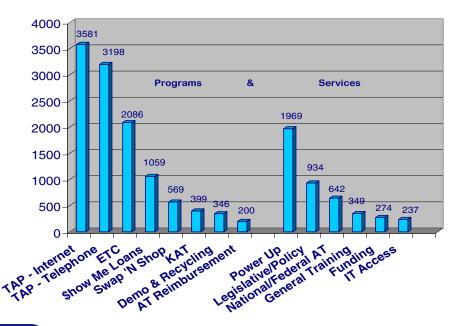
Standing ovation from Power Up attendees for Keynote Sue Thomas.

Training & Contacts

In addition to the 469 participants who attended Power Up, 1,824 Missourians received training on assistive technology by MoAT staff through 30 other training events.

MoAt staff assist persons with disabilities and service providers on a daily basis through phone s email. Assistance is provided in obtaining assistive technology, securing device funding, accessing the various MoAT programs discussed in this report, and gaining disability policy knowledge. During this fiscal year, MoAT staff handled 17,957 inquiries and requests for assistance by telephone and e-mail. The major topics of discussion are listed below.

Major Contact Topics



Power Up 2005 Conference & Expo

" Excellent conference - appreciate low cost and wonderful accommodations!"

"Phenomenal session - Kudos!"

"So many various types of equipment to see and use!"

"This session has increased my knowledge base by leaps and bounds!"

"Great ideas! Very informative!"

"The expo was huge - I was amazed at how many vendors were there!"

Assistive Technology is continually improving and the options are always growing and changing. The annual Power Up Conference & Expo provides a statewide venue to stay abreast of devices and best practices. Educators, rehabilitation professionals, therapists, and consumers receive valuable training from experts across the country, as well as hands-on time with equipment.

Sue Thomas, keynote speaker, captivated the audience with her stories of being an FBI agent and triumphing over barriers associated with her disability. Two Missourians (Kay Dinolfo, Dept. of Revenue & Kevin Lanahan, Dept. of Conservation) received awards for improving access to assistive technology through their support of web accessibility in state government. The Expo Hall was full of activity with fifty-three exhibitors. The thirty-seven sessions increased participant knowledge and

expertise in assistive technology. The closing session combined the Governor's Council on Disabilities' youth poster and journalism contest winners and endnote speaker, Kevin Brown, who brought laughter, insight, and inspiration!



For many people with disabilities, unprecedented educational, vocational and social opportunities can be gained through the use of computers. A predominate reason for this is that computers can be easily adapted for a wide array of disabilities. However, matching individuals to the appropriate adaptation is often tied to their ability to try the various devices available.

Jerry is one of hundreds of Missourians who each year borrow assistive devices from the ETC program. Jerry, who has Cerebral Palsy and lives in Columbia, has been working with computers for pearly thirty years. In that time

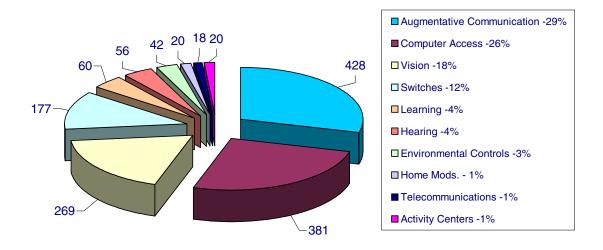


working with computers for nearly thirty years. In that time, he has witnessed first hand the evolution of assistive technology.

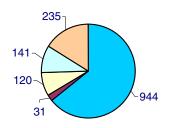
In his quest to identify the most appropriate assistive devices for his needs, Jerry has on several occasions utilized the ETC program, which provides consumers the opportunity to try assistive

devices before purchase. Jerry's progression through the world of computer adaptations has seen him change from the mouse to the trackball to the touchpad, which he currently uses. It has also seen him try technologies ranging from voice input, to eliminate his need to use a keyboard, to the FrogPad one-handed keyboard to the Tash minikeyboard. In some instances, new technologies have proven more effective for Jerry, yet in others, what started out seeming so promising for him, turned out not to be appropriate. It is only through trying devices ahead of time that such determinations can be made.

Devices Loaned by Category



ETC - # Loans by Agency





Program

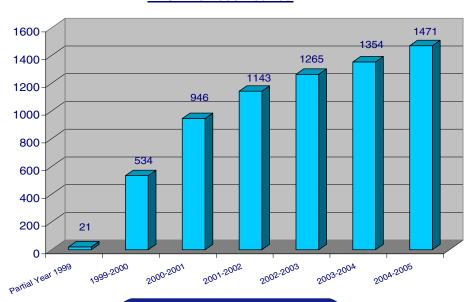
Six years after it started, the ETC Program continues to experience yearly growth in the number of devices it loans and in the number of school districts and agencies who borrow from its inventory of over 1,000 assistive devices. For FY '05, ETC loaned 1,471 devices throughout the state and saw the number of entities signed up for the program inching toward the 450 mark. Augmentative communication devices were again the devices most often borrowed, with computer adaptations and vision related technologies comprising the second and third most borrowed types of technology. Strong consumer satisfaction continues to be a hallmark of the ETC Program with 98% of borrowers giving the program and its level of service strong marks.

There are three primary reasons that people borrow from the ETC Program. The first, and most common, is to provide the chance to borrow multiple items in order to compare

them prior to purchase. The second reason is to enable individuals to borrow a loaner device when their personal device is being repaired. A third, and increasingly important role is borrowing by schools, colleges, universities and organizations in their efforts to increase staff and student knowledge.

As more students with disabilities attend regular schools, today's educators need to know about the various devices they may encounter in their classrooms. A solid understanding of assistive technology is also a necessary skill for tomorrow's teachers, occupational, speech and physical therapists. By tapping into ETC's inventory, local schools can conduct in-services with an array of devices present for staff to see, try and learn about. And higher education faculty can include devices in their classes helping students to understand assistive technology and its specific applications for various types of disabilities. What is learned today will be applied tomorrow, exponentially increasing Missouri's assistive technology knowledge.

ETC - Devices Loaned



Ethan's life has been one of stark contrasts. Born in Ethiopia, Ethan, who is blind, experienced an almost unimaginable childhood of poverty and pain. Intentionally blinded by two men who stole him from his family, he was forced to beg on the streets by the men who robbed him of his sight. Sick with tuberculosis he was found alone on the streets by a samaritan who placed him in a hospital in Ethiopia. He was then identified by an American woman from Indiana who ran an adoption agency. This chain of events eventually led to Ethan's adoption by his current family. It's a long road from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to Ashland, Missouri, but one that Ethan has weathered well.



At age 10, Ethan arrived in Ashland, and began attending Southern Boone County School District, where he

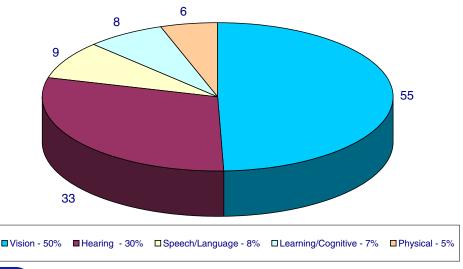
began to receive the various adapted services and devices necessary for his educational development. Initial focus was on learning Braille. Ethan had actually been introduced to Braille while in Ethiopia, where for awhile he attended a Braille orphanage. There was only one phone in the village where the school was located.

In middle school, Ethan began using a Braille 'n Speak electronic notetaker. This device served Ethan well for several years, but eventually his skills and needs surpassed its capacities. Subsequently, Southern Boone County Schools submitted an application to the AT Reimbursement Program for the purchase of a Braille Lite electronic notetaker. The Braille Lite would provide Ethan with a device possessing more advanced features and also provided him with refreshable Braille.

Ethan's BrailleLite serves him well throughout his academic day where his classes include American Literature, Algebra II, Biology II and Spanish. The school noted in their application that Ethan's IEP goals were to increase his written communication skills through better proofreading and editing, goals that both Ethan and the school feel have been successfully accomplished in part through Ethan's use of the BrailleLite.

Within the next year, Ethan will graduate from Southern Boone County High School. Ethan plans on attending college and eventually becoming a sports broadcaster.



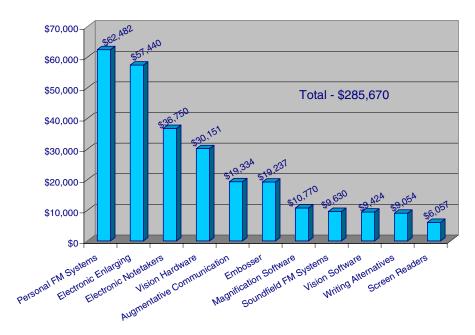


Program

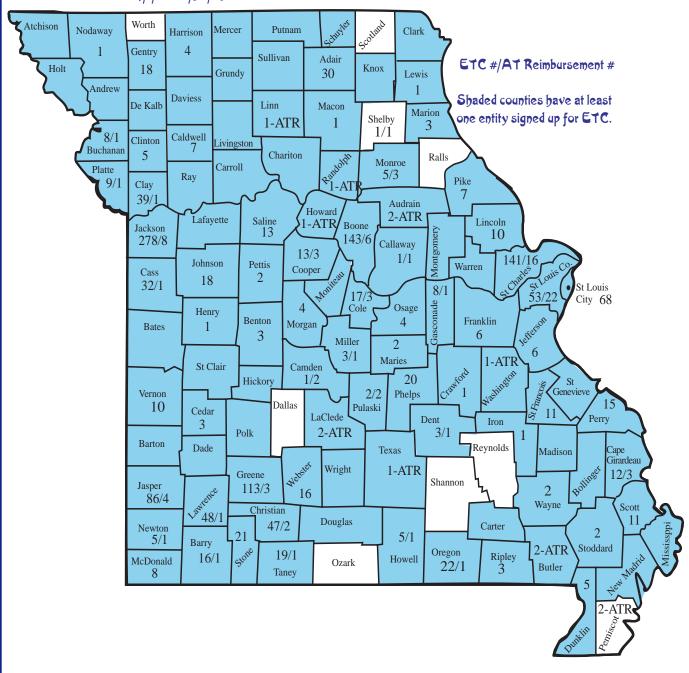
For the third year, MoAT has been pleased to operate the AT Reimbursement Program. Funded by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education, the AT Reimbursement Program helps school districts offset the cost of purchasing assistive technology for students with assistive technology needs written into their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This year, the program received 219 applications from 60 school districts throughout the state. MoAT was able to fund 111 applications, an increase over the previous year, divided among 46 different districts. The program aims to fund those forms of assistive technology between \$1,000 and \$5,000, items such as Braille embossers, augmentative communication devices, computer access systems and electronic enlarging.

Missouri's school districts have taken favorably to the program. Many districts have indicated how pleased they are that this funding source is available and what an impact it has had on the students for whom they have applied. Follow-up surveying has uncovered many instances of students being more engaged in school and achieving higher academic success.

AT Reimbursement: Dollars by Device Type



ETC & AT Reimbursement
Presence and Distribution by County
7/1/04 - 6/30/05



www.at.mo.gov

ETC & AT Reimbursement Map

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Missouri Disability Legislative Listserv

More than 400 persons and organizations kept informed during the 2005 Missouri legislative session through the Missouri Disability Legislative Listserv. The Listserv keeps Missourians with disabilities, their families, and service providers up to date on bills relating to assistive technology and other disability issues. The Listserv provides easy-to-understand summaries as bills and appropriations are introduced and wind through the legislative process. During this year's session, limitations in Medicaid coverage of assistive technology and eligibility, special education, First Steps, accessible voting, and a host of other initiatives were tracked throughout the session. Interested persons subscribe to the Legislative Listserv at no cost.

Comments we've received about the Missouri Disability Legislative Listserv:

"I wouldn't change anything about the Listserv. I appreciate the availability of the updates. It eases my need for information but lack of time for research. It comes right to me, analyzed and easy to understand!"

- Assistive technology service provider.

"The information has been informative and it is helpful that it is not partisan. I send the information on to case workers and families. We greatly appreciate the information." -Developmental disability service provider.

"I use the listsery to keep families updated on disability legislation. I forward postings to approximately 50 people on a regular basis. It would be more but a significant number of people on my network have signed up for the listsery themselves. I like the format of the postings. They are concise and to the point. I very much like the improvements added this year over last year. It helps to be reminded what each bill is for."

-Parent of a child with a disability.

"Thanks for the dependable source of good information."

-Staff of program for infants with disabilities.

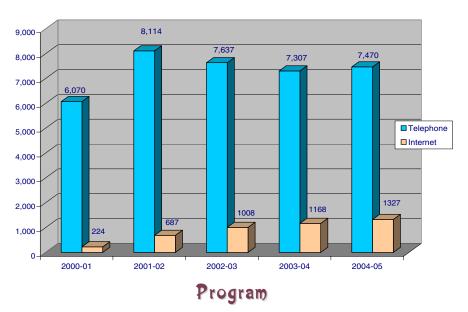
"I am satisfied with the listserv and have passed on information to co-workers, agencies, and consumers. Keep up the good work! Thank you for the helpful information."

-Staff of agency program serving persons who are blind

"The regional council sends the legislative information on to 17 council members and approximately 5 additional advocates. I love this listsery because it is brief and easily understood. Don't change the format."



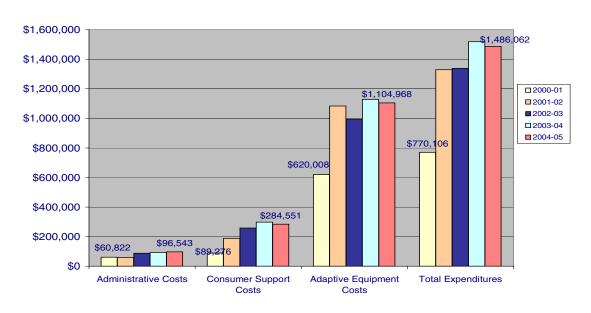
TAP - # Devices Provided



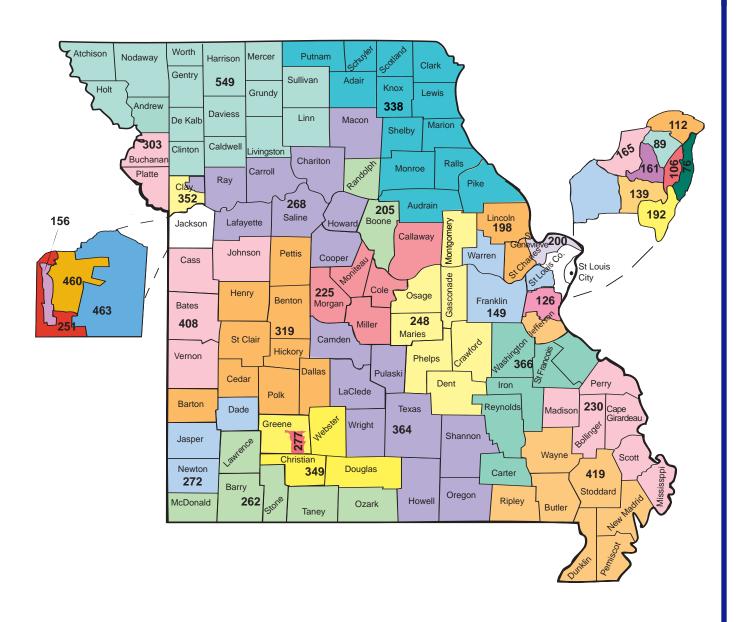
For Missourians with disabilities, the two Telecommunications Access Programs (Telecommunication Access for Telephone and Internet) have made purchasing products, applying for services, searching for jobs and even attending college classes via the telephone and Internet commonplace. The TAP programs provide the adaptive telephone and computer equipment needed for basic access to telephone and Internet telecommunication for Missourians with hearing, vision, mobility and other disabilities.

A critical component of TAP programs are the delivery of consumer support services to assist individuals with disabilities select the most appropriate adaptive equipment and to assist with installation and use of the equipment provided. TAP has provided training to staff from statewide agencies, including the Centers for Independent Living and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, to assist consumers with the selection and use of the adaptive telecommunication equipment. Administration costs for TAP continue to be very low at 6%.

TAP Yearly Expenditures



TAP Equipment Distributed by State Senatorial District



TAP Equipment
Distribution Map

Betty lives in Fortuna in rural Morgan County. At 93, Betty is still active in helping care for cattle on the family farm. Betty, hard of hearing for a number of years, was having increased difficulty understanding people on an amplified phone. Betty received the new Captioned Telephone from the TAP for Telephone Program. Staff from Show-Me Tech, representing TAP-T, trained Betty and one of her family members on how to use the CapTel phone. Betty practiced phoning out and receiving calls through the CapTel relay. She was a quick learner. Being able to read what the other person has to say clears up a lot of misunderstandings from family and health care



professionals. This is quite important to Betty as she really values her independence.

Comments from other TAP for Telephone consumers:

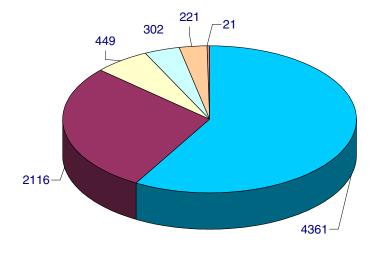
"Your phone is important to me. I feel much safer and I can hear the phone ring if I am in the basement or any of the rooms in my home."

"I can hear [the caller] now!"

"We appreciate getting the phone. We are able to communicate much better!"

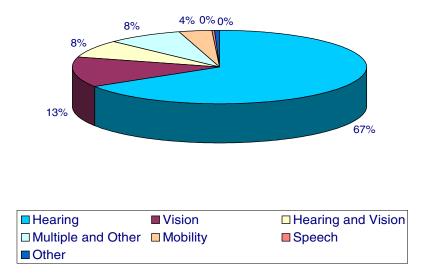
"Thank you. The phone is great!"

TAP for Telephone - Type of Equipment





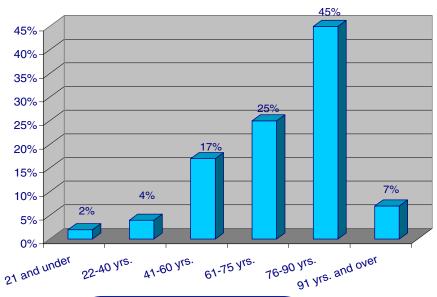
TAP for Telephone - Disability of Recipients



Program

This year, 7,470 adaptive telephone devices were provided by TAP for Telephone. A network of Independent Living Centers provides consumer support and helps ensure appropriate equipment matches through the use of demonstration devices. Follow-up data from program beneficiaries indicates an overall satisfaction rating of 97%, with most reporting they used the equipment to make emergency calls, live independently, and to communicate with family and friends. Many individuals also noted that the phone allowed them to improve access to education and to get or maintain employment. Over 43% of individuals reported that they had been unable to use the phone for 6-20+ years!





Lisa uses a wireless keyboard and Zoom
Text software provided by TAP for Internet. These
assistive devices allow Lisa to overcome barriers
and continue her college education via the Internet.
Due to her disability (Hadju-Cheney disorder), a
bone disorder, Lisa completed her high school
education at home with tutors. Lisa graduated
from West Plains High School, Class of 2002, and
was accepted to Southwest MO State University and



Park University. She is taking on-line classes and is majoring in Graphic Arts and Accounting.

"Thanks to TAP, I am continuing my education so I will have better job opportunities, as opposed to not completing my education. Now I am able to overcome barriers to achieve part of my goal, a college degree. TAP makes it possible for me to achieve my American dream; that is to be a productive and independent citizen, while securing my career path of my choice."

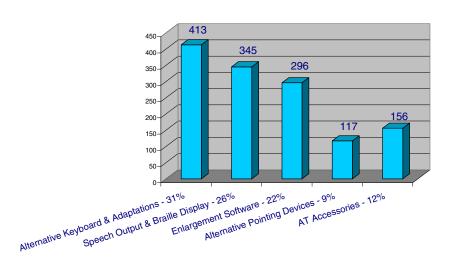
With a 95% satisfaction rating from the people who use the program, the following are a few of the comments received:

"Without ZoomText I would have probably given up."

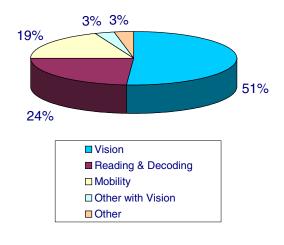
"You have improved my life."

"I'm using it to view my credit card account, store pictures. I even downloaded and filled out some income tax forms. Thank you!"

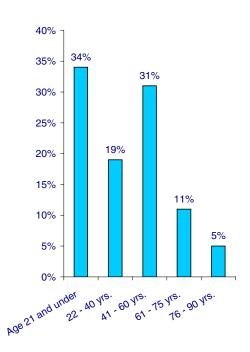
TAP for Internet Equipment



TAP for Internet, Disability of Recipients



Age of Recipients



Program

Missourians throughout the state continue to benefit from the Telecommunications Access for Internet Program. The program provided 1,327 adapted devices during the last 12 months, a 14% increase from last year.

The program provides adaptive technology in four broad categories: alternative keyboards and pointing devices, software adaptations, speech and Braille output, and enlargement software. Though enlargement software is the most often requested adaptation, the program provided over 160 different forms of adaptive technology to consumers this year.

Consumers accessing the program range in age from 2 to 95+. Individuals with visual impairments are the largest disability category to obtain services through the program. Internet access to stay in touch with family and friends and to make contact with businesses and government are the primary activities users perform.

Missouri is unique in that it is the only state in the nation to provide free adapted technology for Internet access.

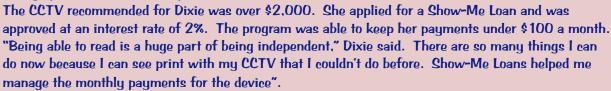


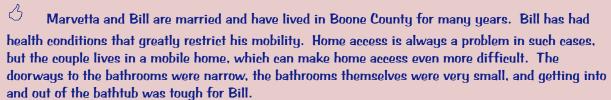
Dixie, age 83, resides in Blue

Springs. Dixie has a vision impairment and was unable to read almost any type of text.

When her mail came, she wasn't able to tell which envelopes were junk mail, and which ones she needed to keep. She wasn't able to see her microwave timer, nor could Dixie read directions on her prescription medicines. She couldn't even read her large print Bible.

Dixie learned that a CCTV could enlarge print material and help her to read.

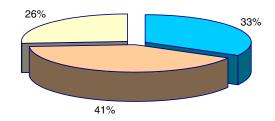




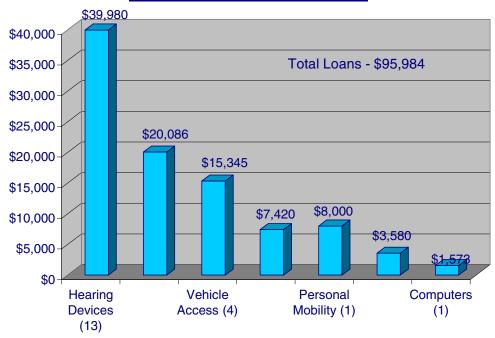
Marvetta and Bill received a Show-Me Loan of \$4,300 to make their bathrooms more accessible. They were able to get a term of 60 months to re-pay the loan at an interest rate of only 3%. "We were able to widen the bathroom doorways, install grab bars and a raised toilet, and put in an accessible shower," Marvetta said about the loan. "The improvements helped to make Bill more independent and safer in our home. We were so happy we were able to use Show-Me Loans to make the needed changes."

Annual Income of Approved Borrowers

□Under \$15,000 (9)
□\$15,000 to \$30,000 (11)
□\$30,001 to \$60,000 (7)



\$how Me Loans - AT by Dollars Loaned



Program

During the past year, \$how-Me Loans was able to provide \$95,984 in low-interest loans to persons with disabilities to obtain assistive technology in Missouri. Loans were

made to make homes more accessible, to install wheelchair lifts for vehicles, and for a variety of other cross-disability assistive technology. The program's interest rates were among the lowest of similar programs nationally, with an average rate of 3.23%. The average amount borrowed during the period was \$3,479. Loan amounts ranged from \$900 to \$9,000 with an average re-payment period of 39 months. The average period of time to process and review applications decreased from 20 days last year to 17 days in 2004-05.

A full 70% of loan applications were approved during the past year. This is the case even though one-third of approved borrowers had annual incomes of \$15,000 or less, and 74% had yearly incomes of \$30,000 or less. During the year, borrowers repaid a total of \$64,641 in principal and interest. Even though borrowers were of relatively low income, far less than 1% (\$889) of the total amount borrowed has been defaulted since the program began. Loan applications were received from every region of Missouri.



Duwayn was able to find a DecTalk, a speech synthesizer, in the Swap 'n Shop equipment exchange program. Although to some people this is considered a piece of outdated technology, it enables Duwayn to use Windows Media when he is producing his Internet radio show.

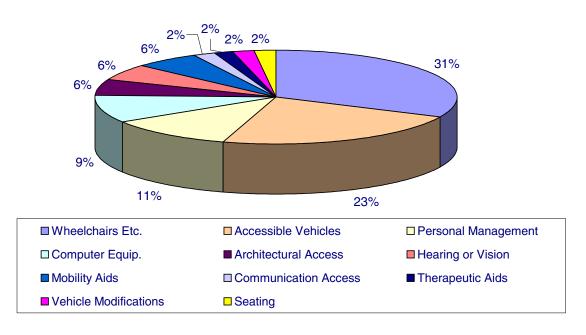
Jo is a retired nurse and was always very active. She lost her ability to walk due to severe arthritis and peripheral neuropathy. When she could no longer transfer from her wheelchair into the family's personal van, they decided to look online at the Swap 'n Shop for a conversion van. Jo felt lucky to find a van in August of 2004. It was



being sold by a family in Brookfield, due to the death of the previous owner. The van already had the Southern Comfort Conversion with a Braun Vangater Wheelchair Lift and lots of nice options. It had only 9,300 miles on it and was very clean inside and out. Along with being able to continue to transport Jo to church, medical appointments and other social activities, the family was able to save considerable money by buying this used van through Swap 'n Shop.

The family of a man who was in St. Louis finishing up his rehabilitation had no way to transport him back home to Little Rock, Arkansas if they couldn't find an adapted van. However, by searching Swap 'n Shop, they located a van in Ballwin. The family who had the van for sale was able to do so swiftly and the man from Arkansas was able to "get home to see his cows."

Transferred Equipment by Category





Program

The Swap n' Shop program is a consumer-to-consumer assistive technology exchange program.

Consumers and service providers can sell, request or donate items through a frequently updated website and listserv. In FY '05, the program saved consumers \$262,851 while transferring 53 listings. In addition, the program

had 122 new pieces of equipment listed. The types of assistive technologies that were transferred include everything from full size accessible vans, to wheelchairs and stair lifts.



New Programs

Missouri Assistive Technology funded three Regional Assistive Technology

Demonstration Centers during the second half of this fiscal year, which are mentioned on page 6 of this report. The Demo Centers are located in Columbia, Kansas City, and Springfield.

Missouri Assistive Technology also funded a Statewide Recycling Program as a result of the passage of the Assistive Technology Act of 2004. Recycled durable medical equipment and computers are offered to people with disabilities at a low cost. Starting in the last quarter of the year, this program placed 73 pieces of durable medical equipment and 5 computers with consumers this year. The popularity of this new program is evident, with many new requests received weekly. Next year's Annual Report will provide a full year of data on these new programs for Missourians.





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Alternative format available on request.

(816) 373-5193-voice (816) 373-9315-TTY